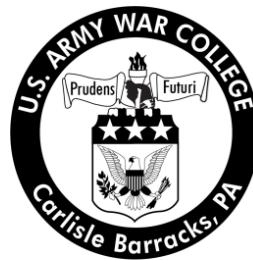


Strategy Research Project International Fellow

The Future of the Armenia – NATO Relationship

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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Abstract

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Ensuring effective international engagement in Armenian foreign policy is critical for the implementation of Armenia's National Security Strategy. Peace and international cooperation are significant components of the National Security Strategy of Armenia, and the relationship between Armenia and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is essential for the country. Strengthening the relationship between Armenia and NATO will increase the international role and status of Armenia. It will support reorganization and modernization of the Armenian Armed Forces and reformation of the Military Security system. A deeper relationship with NATO also will be a guarantee for regulation of unresolved ethnic and armed conflicts in the region with its neighboring states. Increasing the Armenian relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the core organization of the European Union with which the majority of European states are involved, supports the process of Armenia's future integration to the European Union.

The Future of the Armenia – NATO Relationship

The Republic of Armenia attained its independence from the former Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century and since that time Armenia has been engaged in a volatile and complex process of transition from a socialist system to a capitalistic democratic system; from a command economy to a free market economy; and from being a member of a multi-national state to the establishment of the infrastructure of an independent state. Armenian's national policy defines the National Security Strategy of Armenia, which is a nationally significant conceptual document in the country. Ensuring effective international engagement in Armenian foreign policy is critical for the implementation of its National Security Strategy. Peace and international cooperation are significant components of the National Security Strategy of Armenia, and a strong relationship between Armenia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is essential for the country.

Strengthening the relationship between Armenia and NATO will increase the international role and status of Armenia. Deepening this relationship with NATO will enhance the Republic of Armenia's capabilities to face the internal and external challenges of the 21st Century from within the region and its neighboring states. Increasing the level of cooperation with NATO will allow Armenia to more effectively prevent threats such as international terrorism and transnational crime. This relationship with NATO also will support reorganization and modernization of the Armenian Armed Forces and reformation of its Military Security system. A deeper relationship with NATO will be a guarantee for regulation of unresolved ethnic and armed conflicts with Armenia's neighboring states and will impact the process of comprehensive international integration of Armenia that creates favorable conditions for increasing

bilateral relations with NATO member states. Under this framework of cooperation it is written, “NATO and Armenia cooperate on democratic, institutional, and defense reforms, in addition to working together in many other areas, including peace support operations. The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) lays out the program of cooperation between Armenia and NATO and sets out a wide-ranging roadmap for reforms.”¹ Escalating the Armenian relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the core organization of the European Union with which the majority of European states are involved, supports the process of Armenia’s future integration to the European Union.

When Armenia gained its independence, the process of transition of the systems, creation of the security systems, establishment of infrastructures and integration with international organizations such as NATO became critically important for Armenia as an independent state. The Republic of Armenia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and deepened cooperation with NATO in 1994 when Armenia joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. However, the newly established relationship with NATO was not active until 2000 due to a very difficult period of transition and the existence of many domestic problems within the state. In 2002, Armenia was connected to the Virtual Silk Highway and joined the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP). The relationship was escalated quite intensively and Armenia hosted the PfP exercise “Cooperative Best Effort 2003” in June 2003. In June 2004, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Vardan Oskanian at the meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at the level of Heads of State and Government said “Armenia has undertaken a number of steps aimed at enhancing and deepening our relations. Today

we can surely state that Armenia is actively engaged with NATO in all spheres of cooperation considered by the Allies as main priorities and objectives of the Partnership.”² Armenian forces later joined the NATO-led mission in Kosovo (KFOR) where they continue to carry out their mission under the command of the United States.

On June 16, 2005, the Foreign Minister of Armenia presented Armenia’s first IPAP to the North Atlantic Council. In late 2005, NATO and Armenia agreed on the country’s first IPAP and the Allies held their first IPAP Assessment with Armenia in Brussels. The most recent NATO-Armenia IPAP was accepted in November 2011. Since 2005, Armenia has intensified its practical and political cooperation with NATO; Armenian high officials such as the President of Armenia, the Foreign Minister, and the Defense Minister have visited NATO headquarters several times. A NATO information centre was officially opened in 2007 and currently is operating in Yerevan Armenia’s capitol. Several NATO-led exercises took place in Armenia such as the PfP Exercise Cooperative Longbow/Lancer in 2008, and the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre’s large civil emergency NATO/Partnership for Peace consequence management field exercise called “Armenia 2010” in 2010. Since 2009, Armenian troops have been deployed as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under the NATO-led stabilization mission in Afghanistan. The evolution of the relationship between NATO and Armenia during the last decade is evident, and the progress of the relationship proves it is essential for Armenia and reflects the importance of increasing the relationship in the future. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen visited Armenia in September 2012. During this visit he gave a

speech in the State University of Armenia, emphasizing the importance of a NATO's close relationship with Armenia today and in the future.

National Security Strategy (NSS) is a conceptual document of the Republic of Armenia and one of the fundamental values of this document is Peace and International Cooperation: "The Republic of Armenia aspires to expand and develop its level of engagement, and to promote peace and security in both the regional and global context."³ Consequently, Peace and International Security became one of the factors and policies serving the fundamental values of Armenian National Security Strategy. According to this document the strategy for Peace and International Security calls for "Consolidating Armenia's International standing and credibility, pursuing lasting peace and security in the region, and deeper engagement in the international security, including participation in international peacekeeping operations."⁴ In order to execute this strategy the intensification of the cooperation with NATO and its member countries within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace program become essential for the Republic of Armenia's success.

International integration and active engagement in a major international organization such as NATO is a great opportunity for Armenia to implement the main direction of the strategy of integration through participating in a global security effort, fighting against terrorism and participating in peacekeeping operations. Another conceptual military document, the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Armenia, emphasizes that Armenian cooperation with NATO is one of the priority directions for military and military-technical cooperation, "The Republic of Armenia implements the Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO and participates in the NATO Planning

and Review Process, and carries out bilateral military cooperation programs with the NATO members and partner states.⁵ Deeper cooperation will build up potential and proper relations with NATO as well as developing interoperable capabilities with NATO.

Not only is Armenia interested in continuing cooperation with NATO; NATO is interested in this as well due to Armenia's strategic location on NATO's southeastern flank as a strategic corridor between Southern Europe and Central Asia. Interest in this cooperation is illustrated by several visits by the NATO Secretary General to Armenia. During the conference on Regional Cooperation and Partnership with NATO in 2000, former Secretary General Lord Robertson said "the more secure our neighbors are the more secure we are.... European security first of all depends on how well our neighbors are protected."⁶ Increasing the relationship between Armenia and NATO will help to make the region more secure and stable, will help to implement the requirement of Armenia's NSS to modernize the Armenian defense system to bring it in closer conformity with the defense systems and armed forces of advanced states. According to Armenia's 2011 Individual Partnership Action Plan to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, "Armenia also intends to reform, in the framework of Military Education Concept, its entire Defense Education System, develop new education and training programs for junior and senior officers, and professional NCOs, as well as review the conceptions (doctrines) and procedures on the training and employment for every branch and service."⁷ Former US ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch stated in March 2009, "cooperation between Armenia and NATO in reforming the Armenian Armed Forces will help Armenia became not only a consumer but also a producer of global security."⁸ Armenia's Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO affirms the

Armenian government's intention to increase practical and political cooperation with NATO and creates additional reforms of its armed forces to be implemented in the future. Former NATO Special Representative to the South Caucasus Region Robert Simmons said "the President of Armenia was quoted by his office as stressing the importance of an ongoing training exercise under NATO auspices and the alliance's support for Armenia's defense reforms."⁹ The reforms are meant to bring the Armenian army into greater conformity with NATO standards and practices.

The importance of the relationship between Armenia and NATO is vital and essential to meet Armenia's external threats and challenges of the 21st century in the South Caucasus region, especially today in this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment. Development of cooperation between Armenia and NATO will allow the republic to be deeply involved in the process of dealing with global challenges such as international terrorism in all its forms, transnational crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and narcotics, money laundering and human trafficking.

There are many internal directed threats to the Republic of Armenia that can be prevented through Armenia's expanded engagement within international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). According to Armenian Foreign policy "Armenia thus aims to build as many international ties as possible, both within the region and beyond, in order to boost its security."¹⁰ Armenia's engagement in this process will also raise Armenia's role in ensuring global security.

External threats to the Republic of Armenia can be divided into two groups: inter-regional threats which come from unresolved ethnic and armed conflicts with neighboring states and intra-regional threats that are rooted in a clash of interests of the main powers in the region. Former NATO staff officer James E. DeTemple talking about military engagement in the South Caucasus region stated “NATO engagement within the PfP framework should enable the South Caucasus to make steady progress toward interoperability with allied forces and regional security and stability.”¹¹ Consequently, by enhancing its relationship with NATO, Armenia will create favorable conditions for itself to face internal and external threats and to establish cooperation in the field of military security. In order to face the challenges of the 21st century, Armenia is in the process of reforming its defense and security sectors. According to the Armenian National Security Strategy, “The successful implementation of the PfP Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) will foster the greater modernization and efficiency of the Armenian defense system and will bring it in closer conformity with the defense systems of advanced States, including their armed forces.”¹² NATO and its individual Allies are supportive in that process and they have considerable expertise upon which Armenia can draw.

Armenia’s increasing contribution in NATO-led operations is another important area of cooperation. It is a way to establish interoperable units, such as the Armenian Peacekeeping Brigade with their associated combat support and combat service support units, with those of NATO countries. Armenia’s 2011 IPAP states “Armenia continues to develop a brigade using NATO standards and intends to evaluate the units of this brigade in the framework of Operating Capabilities Concept (OCC) thus making them interoperable and capable of contributing to NATO-led operations.”¹³ Armenian

troops are currently deployed as part of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan as well as Kosovo Force (KFOR). Enhancing Armenia's participation and cooperation with NATO will gain Armenia much needed international experience for strengthening its military and will increase its capabilities to meet internal and external threats and challenges of the 21st century.

Based on the Armenian National Security Strategy, "the outbreak and spread of life-threatening epidemics globally and in neighboring regions, as well as natural or man-made disasters, may threaten the National Security of the Republic of Armenia."¹⁴ A deepening relationship with NATO will allow Armenia to better respond to and manage these sorts of crises. In consultation with NATO, Armenia has begun a process of reviewing its national crisis-management procedures and arrangements. As a result, Armenia and NATO are cooperating to establish a information center in Armenia's capital, which will assist in crisis-management and counter-terrorism coordination. NATO Secretary General's Special Representative of the South Caucasus and Central Asia James Aooathurai commented that "NATO will continue to be ready to give practical assistance and advice to Armenia, notably in the context of the Individual Partnership Action Plan in areas where NATO has specific expertise."¹⁵ Through Armenia's Individual Partner Action Plan with NATO, the Armenian Rescue Service is taking a number of measures to improve contingency planning. The Republic of Armenia is also working to enhance links with the NATO-based Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) in order to contribute to international disaster relief operations.

The importance of the South Caucasus region to European security is growing and NATO, as one of the main international organizations in Europe, is interested in keeping the region stable and secure. This is in the best interest of both NATO and Armenia. Establishment of a close relationship between Armenia and NATO will allow them to achieve their common objective in the region, which is regional security and stability. NATO focuses on the South Caucasus as it relates to European interests. The European Union (EU), through its regional initiatives, promotes a favorable environment for the establishment of lasting stability and cooperation in the South Caucasus region. A regional security system supported by NATO and EU would greatly enhance regional stability.

According to the NATO Secretary General: "We believe that partnership is pivotal to the role of Alliance in promoting security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region and contributes to the enhancement of the Alliance's capabilities in crisis management."¹⁶ Partnership for Peace and its Individual Partnership Action Plan remains the main NATO tool for deepening military-political cooperation with Armenia and according to its 2011 IPAP "Armenia wishes to promote regional security and stability in the Caucasus and is determined to work constructively to develop and improve relations with neighbors. Armenia is committed to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is fully supportive of the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group in this regard."¹⁷ It is important to note that the two co-chairs of the OSCE's Minsk Group, the mediating body engaged in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, are from NATO member countries the USA and France. In fact, NATO desires to expand security under the PfP program in the South Caucasus region; the three regional states - Armenia,

Azerbaijan and Georgia - are moving toward a closer relationship with NATO. This creates a favorable environment to resolve the existing economic, ethnic and armed conflicts between the states in the region and promises a bright future.

The Republic of Armenia is seeking to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and to normalize its relations with Azerbaijan through dialogue and cooperation, NATO's principal methods of conflict resolution. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, during his visit to the South Caucasus in September 2012, said that his visit reflected NATO's commitment to security and stability in the South Caucasus region. In his speech, he commended NATO's existing partnership with Armenia and said: "There must be no return to conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Tensions must be reduced and concrete steps must be taken to promote regional cooperation and reconciliation."¹⁸ Armenia continues to work with the OSCE Minsk Group in order to support their efforts to facilitate a negotiated resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Armenia also is seeking a normalization of relations with Turkey; despite the fact that Armenia considers the trade and transport blockade imposed by Turkey on Armenia a direct threat to Armenia, a threat to the stability of the region and an obstacle for development of regional cooperation. Enhancing the relationship between Armenia and NATO will create an environment more conducive to resolving this problem. Armenia recognizes the important role of NATO for supporting in conflict resolution between individual member and partner states. The border between Armenia and Turkey is close for many years and this is a real obstacle for regional cooperation and economic development. Armenia realizes that NATO could be supportive to resolve this

problem, considering that Turkey is a NATO member country and Armenia is a NATO partner country. These all facts emphasize the importance of NATO in the South Caucasus region and especially the necessarily close relationship Armenia is seeking with NATO.

Through the NATO Partnership for Peace program, Armenia has been involved in the Euro-Atlantic security enhancing process working with NATO Allies. Since 1994, the PfP program remains the primary vehicle for Armenia to move closer to the Alliance and it provides an essential way for Armenia to transform its defense establishments and develop interoperability with NATO forces. As I mentioned, Armenia's further military and military-technical cooperation with NATO is one of the priority directions for Armenia's relationship with NATO within the frameworks of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and PfP program. According to Armenia's Military Doctrine, "to develop prospective and proper relations and developing interoperable capabilities with NATO, the Republic of Armenia implements the Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO and participated in the NATO Planning and Review Process, and carries out bilateral military cooperation programs with NATO members and partner states."¹⁹ Armenia intends to increase practical and political cooperation with NATO on democratic, institutional, and defense reforms, and has developed practical cooperation in many other areas, including peacekeeping operations. For this purpose the PfP Individual Partnership Program (IPP), the Individual Partnership Action Plan, the Partnership Action Plan on Terror (PAP-T), and the PfP Planning and Review Process are important instruments for Armenia's cooperation with NATO.

Since 2002, the PfP Planning and Review Process has been a significant tool for Armenia's forces to work and cooperate with NATO. Cooperation between Armenia and NATO involves a large spectrum of issues. Based on the IPAP, this cooperation inspires confidence in further engagement and strengthens relations with NATO. Deepening relations with NATO will also assist Armenia to implement professional military education and training reforms within its armed forces. Dr. James M. Keagle, talking about NATO engagement with the PfP Individual Partnership Action Plan, said that, "Education and training transformation across the PfP countries is intended to contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond. It may ultimately prove to be key to strengthening defense institutions, enhancing capabilities to support coalition operations and respond to global threats, and possibly even unfreezing existing regional conflicts."²⁰ Executing the specified events detailed in the 2011 IPAP will also contribute to increasing the cooperative relationships between NATO and Armenia.

Through the Partnership Action Plan on Terror Armenia shares intelligence and analytic information with NATO, fortifying its national counter-terrorist capabilities and providing Armenia's contribution to the fight against terrorism and organized crime. According to Armenia's IPAP 2011-2013, "Armenia also intends to enhance its capabilities to manage the consequences caused by terrorist acts and organized crime. Building on existing cooperation with NATO in this area, Armenia is ready to become more actively involved in the implementation of relevant programs and activities and in the PAP-T, including improving the exchange of relevant intelligence."²¹ Thus, deepened relations with NATO will assist Armenia to further enable its capabilities to fight against global terrorism, to combat organized crime, and to protect critical

communication and information systems against cyber attacks. For this purpose border security is critical for Armenia. In order to improve its border security capabilities Armenia will continue to cooperate with NATO. In order to develop security practices and procedures NATO must support Armenia's efforts to improve training and personnel management, financial planning and identification of priority equipment.

Armenia's intensified relations with NATO will establish a productive area for enhancing bilateral relations with member states of the Alliance in the political, informational, economic and military sectors. There are many examples of how Armenia is developing bilateral cooperation under the shadow of NATO. The United States of America and EU countries have a significant role in the military and political process in the South Caucasus region; the relationship between the US and Armenia is developing especially dramatically. This wide-ranging cooperation includes: implementation of democratic reforms in Armenia; enlargement of commercial ties and economic cooperation; establishment of greater stability and security in the region; promotion of regional cooperation; engagement in the fight against international terrorism; confrontation of the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and other global security threats.

Using diplomacy, Armenia is working intensively with France and the USA. As NATO principal members and also as co-chairs of the OSCE's Minsk Group, these countries are making significant efforts to peacefully solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the issue of the closed border by Turkey. Solving these existing problems in the South Caucasus will provide a more secure and stable region; will promote regional

cooperation, open trade and market; and eventually will sustain real economic growth in the region.

The Russian Federation, as an important strategic partner country for Armenia, as well as co-chair of the OSCE's Minsk Group is deeply involved in this process as well. Russia seeks peacefully to solve existing problems in the region and makes great efforts to sustain long-lasting security and stability in South Caucasus. Thus, NATO and Russia have common interests and almost the same approach towards those issues, which means that Armenia's strategic relationship and deeper military-political cooperation with Russia will not be an obstacle for escalating relationship between Armenia and NATO. Moreover, cooperation between Russia and NATO started in 1991 and the areas of cooperation with NATO are almost the same for Russia and for Armenia as well. Both countries are willing to increase their relationship with NATO and currently are working in several main sectors: military cooperation, cooperation on Afghanistan, fighting terrorism, non-proliferation of WMD, and others. Consequently, Armenia's increasing relationship with NATO will likely not harm the strong relationship between Armenia and Russia. Moreover according to Armenia's foreign policy, Armenia is not seeking full membership in NATO, thus mitigating any Russian concerns.

Public awareness of its problems is a very important issue for Armenia. As the element of national power information must reach the Armenian people in order to keep them informed about on-going efforts and the importance of NATO and Armenia's cooperation with the Alliance. For this reason, Armenia organizes an annual NATO week in Armenia since 2007 and through NATO information center in the capital

Yerevan disseminates information to its people about the role and policies of the Alliance.

In the field of military cooperation between Armenia and NATO, military education is an essential component in the process of defense reform. NATO and the United States of America emphasize the importance of professional military education and training with PfP Partners as the cornerstone of wide-ranging cooperation in the future. Dr. James M. Keagle and Tiffany G. Petros talking about NATO engagement with the PfP Partners through education said, "Both NATO and US have placed education at the top of the list of transformational priorities."²² According to the 2010 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review, "DoD will place special emphasis on ... building partner capacity skill sets in its professional military education and career development policies."²³ The United States and its NATO Allies are cooperating with PfP Partners to recognize not only that Partners and Alliance weapons systems are interoperable to promote security in the region or elsewhere, but also to build defense institutions through Professional Military and Civilian Defense Education and to maintain education and training transformation.

NATO's framework of cooperation under NATO's relationship with Armenia states, "Experts in military education and training from NATO and Partner nations, coordinated by NATO staff, work with Armenian military officials to review Armenia's progress on the Military Education Concept."²⁴ The Republic of Armenia is cooperating with individual NATO member countries such as the US, UK, Greece, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic, to develop democratic institutions within Armenia and to enhance security through increased military interoperability.

For this reason Armenia has signed several intergovernmental agreements with those countries, which provide opportunities for Armenia to educate its military personnel, from noncommissioned officers to senior officers as well as civilians, at different foreign defense academies and security institutions abroad. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Celeste Wallander talking about cooperation between the U.S. and Armenia said, “We have expanded the number of events and we have begun to focus on more strategic and long-term objectives in terms of building Armenia’s defense cooperation capacity.”²⁵ Continuing her speech about U.S./Armenian bilateral cooperation within NATO, she said, “So I think that we have a good foundation of cooperation already and, as we are moving forward, opportunities are growing and we really welcome that.”²⁶ Continuing to develop relations with NATO and the United States bilaterally, Armenia has joined Defense Education Enhancement Programs (DEEPs), which provide not only an effective way to increase the security capabilities of Armenia, but also create an effective environment for regional security and stability.

Armenia’s participation in NATO-led exercises and operations, as well as its contribution to the coalition and NATO forces, is another important way in which Armenia works with individual members of the Alliance. Through this cooperation Armenia gains status as a reliable PfP Partner country for NATO. Since 2004, Armenia has been contributing troops to the Kosovo Force; initially under the Greek command and currently continuing their mission serving under U.S. command. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Armenia also deployed its troops within coalition forces serving under Polish command. Since February 2010, Armenia has made important contributions to the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan and currently has troops serving in two different

provinces under German and U.S. commands. Thus, close cooperation with individual members of the Alliance will increase Armenia's relationship with NATO. Working alongside NATO and its individual Allies will allow Armenia to facilitate the interoperability of its Armed forces with those of NATO countries, using NATO standards.

Ultimately, Armenia's close bilateral relationship with the U.S. and with NATO member states in Europe will support the process of Armenia's integration to the European family. According to Armenia's Individual Partnership Action Plan to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, "Further integration into European political, economic and social structures and institutions is Armenia's main foreign policy objective."²⁷ Both NATO and EU organizations are sharing common strategic interests towards the South Caucasus region. Even while not seeking membership in NATO, Armenia intends to intensify its close relationship with NATO to promote security and stability in the region and to allow Armenia to work towards its objective to integrate into European structures and institutions. Dr. James M. Keagle and Tiffany G. Petros talking about the role of NATO cooperation with PfP Partners said, "Regardless of what path a PfP Partner chooses, the path to closer cooperation with NATO involves transforming both public and private sectors in order to promote democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and sustainable social and economic development."²⁸ Thus, enhancing all these sectors in cooperation with NATO, Armenia will complete its institutional and legislative requirements for EU membership.

Indeed, the EU is one of Armenia's main trading partners and it is a large export market for Armenia. As a member of the EU Eastern Partnership project, Armenia

seeks closer economic integration with the European Union in order to promote economic growth in the country. However, Armenia is currently the most isolated country in the region and therefore the economic growth in Armenia is not evident or sustainable. Regional instability, escalating violence, closed borders and economic blockades are the key factors causing difficulties for economic growth in Armenia. Writing about economic challenges faced by the new Armenian State, political scientist Sarian Armand said, “The promotion of a stability pact would be incumbent on creating a free-trade zone, which could become a precondition to possible integration in the EU. The important measures to be registered in this pact would be geared toward three priorities: security, resumption of trade, and the maintenance of credibility necessary to the resumption of investments.”²⁹ It is almost impossible to imagine economic growth in Armenia without having regional stability.

It is difficult to enhance Armenia’s access to the European market and to encourage further European investment in Armenia without the peaceful settlement of existing conflicts in the region, and without maintaining long-lasting security and stability in the region. Increasing the relationship between NATO and Armenia, as a future determinant of Armenian national security strategy, will promote the conflict-prevention process in the region and support the establishment of a sustainable regional stability. Talking about economic challenges in Armenia, Sarian Armand said, “In the geopolitical context, any advance toward peace and stability in the area will improve the overall performance of the country and raise the standard of living. If these objectives are achieved in the medium term, Armenia will finally be able to benefit from the potential advantages of its geographical location.”³⁰ To this end, it is obvious that deeper

relationship between North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Armenia will remain crucial for Armenian national security strategy today and in the future.

Conclusions

The existence of Armenia's unsolved territorial, political, economic, and armed conflicts with its neighboring states, as well as the intersection of the interests of worldwide key role-player states and international organizations in the region, emphasize the extreme importance of Armenia's National Security Strategy. The Republic of Armenia, with its strategic allies, partners and international organizations, strongly support NATO's role in the region, as one of the significant factors of Armenia's National Security Strategy.

Deepening Armenia's relationship with NATO will enable Armenia not only to consolidate its achievements of the last two decades, but it will also enhance regional security and deepen Armenia's integration with Europe. Increased cooperation with NATO is needed to improve many areas and sectors in Armenia, to meet the requirements of the 21st century. A deeper Armenian relationship with NATO will allow Armenia to implement real democratic, institutional, and defense reforms in the country and provide opportunities for working together in several areas, such as the peaceful regulation of unresolved armed conflicts in the region, the fight against international terrorism and transnational crime, disaster response coordination and crisis-management, and in the sectors of science and the environment.

Armenia will increase its relations with NATO through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace program. The Individual Partnership Action Plan 2011-2013 is the main document that shows how Armenia is going to

implement its reform plans according the timeline, which has been set up and agreed by Armenia and NATO. These reforms relate to the different areas such as political, judicial, security, defense and military, science and environment sectors. Armenia will intensify regular consultations with the Alliance on security and foreign policy issues and will also activate cooperation between Armenia's Ministry of Defense, Parliament, Public Council, and Non Governmental Organizations and NATO through experience sharing, participation in seminars, conferences, workshops, trainings and exercises held in Armenia and abroad. Enhancement of Armenia's participation in NATO-led operations is another way for Armenia to increase its relationship with NATO. For that reason, Armenia established peacekeeping brigade, using NATO standards, and strives to have a capacity to deploy and sustain up to one battalion with combat support and combat service support by 2015.

Armenia's close relation with NATO will have significant political and economic implication by enlarging commercial ties and economic cooperation in the region and beyond, which can be a key factor for long-term growth and development of Armenia. Regional security and stability is a cornerstone of Armenian success, a vital priority of the Armenian National Security Strategy and a main objective of NATO's relationship with Armenia. The relationship between NATO and Armenia should be increased in all areas to ensure Armenian security and stability and as a means for Armenian integration in to the European family. This relationship is the future determinant of Armenian National Security Strategy.

This relationship with NATO is and will stay as one of the significant components of Armenia's National Security Strategy, and will be valuable for Armenian national interests.

Endnotes

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